

### **DEMON POSSESSION - Part 1**

July 19, 2012

The subject of “Demons” raises more than a few questions, some of which remain unanswered and may never be answered. As we examine this topic, we want to try to answer a few questions regarding Demons: 1. Their identification, 2. Their actions during the New Testament times, 3. The purpose of Demon Possession, 4. Where did they go?

What were demons, devils, and unclean spirits? Well, to begin with, we can be sure that they were the same thing referred to by different names. We understand that there are three spirit beings that exist – God or deity, angels, and departed spirits (mankind that has passed from this life to the next). We know that those that have left the earthly tabernacle of the body still exist in the form of a spirit (Mt. 22:23-32; Lk. 16:19-31; Rev. 6:9-10). Out of these three groups, demons have to be a part of one of them. Demons are not deity. This leaves either angels or departed spirits of dead men/women. When answering a question such as this, it is often the case that we have to use the process of elimination just as we just as we eliminated the possibility that demons are deity. We now turn our attention to the idea that demons are wicked angels or the devil’s angels.

The use of the word “devil” in describing demons is a weak translation of the word, which the King James Version uses. It should be “demons” because we are never given any indication that there is more than one devil or Satan. In fact, we are told that there is just one (Jn. 8:44). The evil spirit we know as Satan, the serpent, and the devil is always found to be singular in number in both the New and Old Testament while the word demon is found to be both singular and plural in both the Hebrew and the Greek, indicating one or more at any given time.

Some support the idea that these demons were the fallen angels of which Peter and Jude spoke, or those that were cast down. There are numerous problems with this position, but we will focus on one of the most problematic. The reason that fallen angels must be eliminated is because they were never allowed to “roam” the earth as their leader Satan was allowed to do. When describing the fact that God will punish sin and wickedness Peter used these angels as examples. He said, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). Jude supported Peter’s claims with a statement of his own, “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). They were cast from heaven to hell and not to the earth where only Satan was given the opportunity to “roam” the earth (2 Pet. 5:8).

While men are not inspired today, it is helpful to hear what many sound Bible scholars have said on the matter. Justin Martyr held that demons were the souls of the departed dead, as did Josephus. McClintock and Strong states: “Whether they are to be reckoned as belonging to the class, and as fallen from the original condition of the angels, does not clearly appear from any statement of Scripture.” While Philo, the Jew, points out that the Jews used demon and angel interchangeably. This caused many to do the same. Brother Alexander Campbell noted:

“But this is not a logical inference; for the Jews called the winds, the pestilence, and the lightings of heaven all angels, as indicative of their agency in accomplishing the will of God. In this sense, indeed, a demon might be officially called an angel. But in this sense, demon is to angel as

the species to the genus: we can call a demon an angel, but we cannot call an angel a demon-just as we can call every man an animal, but we cannot call every animal a man.”

Eliminating angels as being the demons we read about, leaves us with only one other option, departed spirits of wicked and evil men. Next week, we introduce evidence that demons are the departed spirits of wicked and evil men in regard to the words used by the inspired writers of the Bible.